

**TOWN OF NORWICH**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**DRAFT Minutes**

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026**

**Tracy Hall and Zoom**

**Members present:** Jaan Laaspere (Chair), Christian Spalding (Vice-Chair), Jeff Goodrich, Bob Pape, Vince Crow, Miller Nuttle

**Members absent:** Mary Gorman

**Staff:** Steven True, Director, Planning & Zoning

**Minute Taker:** Steven True

**Others Present:** None

1. **Meeting opened at 6:30 PM**
2. **Approve Agenda:** Goodrich notes that he'd like more clarity on the contents of the packet going forward. Laaspere concurs, after discussion, there is consensus to table the discussion until item 4(c). Goodrich then moves to approve the agenda, Spalding seconds. During discussion, Spalding requests to add an update of the 2026 Bike/Ped grant application to the agenda. The **MOTION** to approve the agenda and add the Bike/Ped grant update as agenda item 8 carries (6-0).
3. **Public Comment or correspondence for items not on the agenda:** none
4. **Organizational Meeting**
  - a. **Election of Officers**
    - i. **Chair:** Goodrich moves, Spalding seconds to nominate Jaan Laaspere as the Chair of the Norwich Planning Commission. Hearing no other nominee, the **MOTION** carries, (6-0)
    - ii. **Vice-Chair:** Goodrich moves, Pape seconds to nominate Christian Spalding as the Vice-Chair of the Norwich Planning Commission. Hearing no other nominee, the **MOTION** carries, (6-0)
    - iii. **Clerk:** After discussion, and the volunteering of staff member True to take minutes, Spalding moves, Goodrich seconds to nominate Bob Pape as the Clerk of the Norwich Planning Commission, with True as the minute taker and with Pape providing a supervisory role over the minutes. **MOTION** carries. (6-0). The board thanks Vincent Crow for his hard work taking minutes over his first term.
  - b. **Planning Commission Bylaw Revision**
    - i. Members were presented with the current Bylaws last adopted in 2021 and which contain the Bylaws themselves, and Title 1 V.S.A. §310-314 and the Town of Norwich, Vermont Conflict of Interest Policy, adopted by the Norwich Selectboard in 2018, both incorporated by reference into the Bylaws.

- ii. Members were also presented with a model Planning Commission Bylaw based on The Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual published by the Vermont Land Use Education and Training Collaborative (2005).
- iii. Members were instructed to review these documents for discussion under a future agenda item.

**c. 2026 work plan, priorities and methods of work**

- i. Laaspere notes how busy the upcoming months are going to be in the lead-up to the adoption a new Town Plan in 2028 and invites members to think creatively about methods to best work together and achieve this goal while maintaining compliance with Title 1 V.S.A §310-314. Members discuss the delegation of work like what has been done with the Housing element and Energy element. Members discuss how members might work together and remain under a quorum. Laaspere encourages members to work with Staff and to provide content and feedback for the packet in advance of meeting times.
- ii. Laaspere and True will work together to come up with a more orderly method to annotate and name contents of the packets going forward.

**5. Village Master Plan update**

- a. Laaspere reviewed the changes to the Project Summary, Work Plan and Steering Committee membership list coming out of the Planning Commission Special Meeting held April 28<sup>th</sup>, noting that this topic will be an ongoing agenda item during the life of the project.
- b. The next step is to update the Selectboard on the Commission's progress with the project, scheduled to happen the May 13<sup>th</sup> regular Select Board meeting. Laaspere and True to attend.

**6. Short-term Rental Interim Bylaw update**

- a. Laaspere and True updated members on the outcome of the Public Hearing on the Short-term Rental Interim Bylaw held by the Select Board at their April 22<sup>nd</sup> regular meeting. Based on the public feedback from the hearing around preexisting non-conforming uses, owner occupancy, and an addition from the Norwich Fire Chief, members reviewed a SECOND draft of the Interim Bylaws, and after discussion, Goodrich moved, Pape second to approve the SECOND draft as amended, and request the Select Board hold another public hearing at their convenience.  
**MOTION** carries (6-0).

**7. Energy Chapter update**

- a. Item tabled to a future agenda item.

**8. 2026 Bike/Ped Grant Application update**

- a. Spalding, noting the action of the Planning Commission to move the Grant Application forward at the February 10<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, read the application's narrative to the members. Nuttle recommended that the letter from residents requesting action on this grant be included in the application. After discussion,

the members had consensus that the narrative was appropriate and well-constructed.

- b. True outlined the next step which is to prepare and present the application to the Select Board at their next regular meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup>, requesting that the Select Board take formal action at their June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. The application is due June 12<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Minutes from February 10<sup>th</sup>, April 14<sup>th</sup> & April 28<sup>th</sup>**

- a. Goodrich moved, Crow seconds to approve the minutes. No discussion. **MOTION** carries (6-0).

**10. Adjourn**

- a. **MOTION** is made by Spalding, seconded by Pape to adjourn. No discussion. **MOTION** carries (6-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.
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